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General

Iraq is located at the head of the Persian Gulf within a triangle of mountains, desert, and fertile river valleys. The coastline, about 36 miles long, extends from Khawr Shatanah to the mouth of the Shatt al Arab. The country is bounded on the E by Iran, on the N by Turkey, on the W by Syria and Jordan, and on the S by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

After an 8-year war with Iran, Iraq restored diplomatic relations in 1990 and is still trying to work out an agreement concerning the freedom of navigation and sovereignty over the Shatt al Arab waterway. In 1992, the United Nations Boundary Commission redefined Iraq's border with Kuwait, moving it slightly to the N. Iraq formally accepted this UN-demarcated border and recognized the independence of Kuwait in 1994.

The country slopes from mountains, up to 3,050m high, standing along the Turkey/Iran border to the alluvial plains of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. These two rivers join to form the Shatt al Arab. Several areas of reedy marshes lie along the S border.

The climate is mostly desert with dry, hot summers and cool, mild winters. The mountain area in the N has cold winters with occasional heavy snow.

Buoyage System

The IALA Buoyage System (Region A) is in effect. See Chart No. 1 for further IALA Buoyage System information.

Currency

The official unit of currency is the Iraqi dinar, consisting of 1,000 fils.

Government

Iraq, which received independence from the League of Nations mandate under British administration in 1932, is a republic ruled by the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), which enacts legislation by decree. The President, elected by the RCC, appoints and leads a Council of Ministers responsible for administration. There is a 250-member National Assembly, whose members serve 4-year terms, with some legislative power; 220 members are directly elected, with the remaining 30 members appointed by the President.

A Kurdish Assembly was elected in the N part of the country in 1992 and calls for Kurdish self-determination within a federated Iraq. However, this assembly is not recognized by the Baghdad government.

The legal system is based on Islamic law in special religious courts, with a civil law system elsewhere.

The capital is Baghdad.



Flag of Iraq

Holidays

The following holidays are observed:

New Year's Day	January 1
Army Day	January 6
Ramadan Revolution Day	February 8
Nawrus Day	March 21
Labor Day	May 1
Republic Day	July 14
National Day	July 17

Islamic holidays, which are subject to the appearance of the moon, include Eid Al-Fitr (End of Ramadan), Eid Al-Adha (End of Pilgrimage), Hijrah (Islamic New Year), Ashoora, and the Prophet's Birthday.

Industries

Crude oil production and refining are the major industries. Other industries include petrochemicals, textiles, construction materials, and food processing.

Agriculture includes wheat, barley, rice, dates, vegetables, cotton, wool, and livestock.

A UN-sponsored economic embargo continues against Iraq, as the Baghdad government has been unwilling to abide by UN resolutions.

Languages

The official language is Arabic. Kurdish is spoken in the NE part (Kurdish region). Other languages used are Assyrian and Armenian.

Mined Areas

Vessels are advised that Mined Areas exist in the N part of the Persian Gulf. Further information should be obtained from the local authorities. Mine sightings should be reported to the naval authorities by INMARSAT (150 5612) or to Coalition naval vessels on VHF channel 13 or 16. Details of areas

reported to be dangerous due to mines are also promulgated by Notice to Mariners issued by the Middle East Navigation Aids Service (MENAS) and by MARAD advisories.

Regulations

General

Vessels bound for Iraqi territorial waters should send an ETA at least 24 hours in advance to the State Enterprise for Water Transport, Basrah. (Telex: 207077 BWAKR. Telegraph: Bawakhir Basrah)

All vessels within Iraqi territorial waters should listen for instructions on VHF channel 16 or 461.5 kHz.

Iraq Embargo

1. **Summary.**—The naval interception effort in support of the United Nations sanctions pertaining to Iraq continues in the Arabian Gulf and other areas where vessels are inbound to or outbound from Iraq.

Cargo bound for Aqaba (Jordan) or transshipment from Aqaba will normally be inspected ashore by a team consisting of Lloyds Register and the Aqaba Port Authority.

Vessels traversing the N part of the Arabian Gulf, the Shatt Arab waterway, or Khawr Abd-Allah waterway should expect to be queried and, if bound for or departing from Iraqi ports, boarded by multinational naval units enforcing the UN sanctions.

Documentation requirements for the officials in Aqaba and the naval units in the Arabian Gulf are identical. Iraq-bound cargoes, other than approved food, medical supplies, or humanitarian items, will not be allowed to pass. Vessels not in possession of appropriate authorization letters from the UN may be subject to delay until proper documentation is obtained.

All goods sent into Iraq under the Oil-for-Food program require a UN authorization letter. All goods sent legally into Iraq outside the Oil-for-Food program, with the exception of food and medicine, require a UN authorization letter.

Food and medicine are not subject to UN sanctions, and are not required to have a UN authorization letter unless they are being sent in under the Oil-for-Food program.

2. **United Nations Security Council Resolution 986 and subsequent resolutions (the Oil-for-Food program).**—The implementation of Oil-for-Food does not affect the mission of the Multinational Forces operating under the authority of UNSCR 661 (1990), UNSCR 665 (1990), and other relevant resolutions. The operating procedures set forth in this notice account for the requirements of UNSCR 986 and subsequent resolutions. Ships traversing the enforcement area in the Arabian Gulf should expect delays resulting from maritime interception operations. Strict adherence to the procedures in this notice will minimize any delays associated with seaborne inspections.

3. The following requirements are in effect for all ships bound for Iraq traversing the Maritime Interception Operations Area in the Arabian Gulf:

a. **Notification.**—A minimum of 72 hours advance notification is required prior to arrival at the Enforcement Area. Ships must contact the Maritime Interception Forces (MIF) Coordinator, US Naval Forces, Central Command (Bahrain) by fax (+973 724 344 or +973 724 334) or by

letter (see paragraph 8). The following information must be included:

- i. Vessel's name.
 - ii. Flag.
 - iii. International radio call sign.
 - iv. Itinerary, including port of cargo origin.
 - v. Description of cargo.
 - vi. Volume of cargo.
 - vii. Number of holds.
 - viii. Dimensions of holds.
 - ix. Identification of the vessel's shipping agent.
 - x. Identification of the vessel's owners.
 - xi. If required (refer to paragraph 1), UN Security Council letter showing serial number, issue date, and expiration date.
 - xii. Estimated arrival date and time at the checkpoint (see paragraph 3c).
- b. **Cargo configuration.**—All cargo must be accessible for inspection at sea. Cargo carriers are responsible for loading cargoes to ensure accessibility. The following specific guidance applies:
- i. Containerized cargo.—Containers must not be stacked more than three high from the deck. As a safety precaution to protect inspection teams, containers stacked more than three high will be considered inaccessible. This provision applies to both internal and deck-loaded containers.
 - ii. Break-bulk cargo.—Packaged or bagged break-bulk cargo must be loaded in a manner which permits thorough inspection. Palletized rows of cargo require adequate separation to allow for safe access.
 - iii. Loose bulk cargo.—Loose bulk cargo must be accessible for physical and visual inspection, verification of measurement, soundings, and sampling. Hatch covers must be opened to allow for thorough inspection.
 - iv. If a vessel's cargo is deemed inaccessible for inspection, the vessel may be directed to return to a port where acceptable cargo loading can be arranged.
- c. **Checkpoint.**—Vessels bound for or departing from Iraqi ports or the Mina Al-Bakr Oil Terminal must pass within a 5-mile radius of 29°12'N, 49°20'E. Approaching vessels should contact the MIF Commander on bridge-to-bridge radio, VHF channel 16, when within 5 miles of this point. Vessels will not be permitted to proceed from this point until cleared by the MIF Commander. Vessels containing cargoes for destinations other than Iraq will not be allowed passage into Iraq.
- d. **Vessel tonnage limit.**—Vessels under 30,000 dwt will not be authorized to proceed to Mina Al-Bakr for the purpose of loading petroleum cargoes.
- e. **Documentation.**—Vessel documentation must conform to the following requirements:
- i. An original manifest list, describing the cargo as well as its location in the ship, must be on board. The original manifest must include the port of origin, ports of call, complete business names and addresses of all shippers and consignees, and the final destination of all cargo. A complete business address must include either the street address, a prominent identifiable geographic location, or a post office box, plus a telephone number or fax number.

ii. Cargo addressed to a free-trade zone must have the name, address, and telephone or fax number of the consignee taking custody of the container or cargo.

iii. Consignee names and addresses on all cargo must match the manifest.

iv. The manifest must be signed in the original by the vessel's Master or Chief Mate. The manifest may be on the shipper's letterhead, fax, photocopy, or computer printout, but it must bear an original signature, contain all the information listed above, and otherwise comply with normal maritime transport practice.

v. The original manifest may consist of more than one document if there are amendments that list cargo dropped off at a given port, or correct the original manifest. These amendments may originate from the shipper or carrier. Since additional documents may be transmitted to a vessel by such means as telegram or fax, they need not bear an original signature. However, the Master is required to certify in writing that the amended manifest accurately reflects what is on board the vessel. The underlying requirements are for accurate documentation of cargo and destination, and for a high degree of confidence that the documents are authentic.

vi. If applicable, the cargo documentation must include a copy of the authorization issued by the UN pursuant to UNSCR 661 or UNSCR 986 and subsequent resolutions. Refer to paragraph 1 above for specific authorization requirements.

4. Vessel pre-clearance.

a. Oil tankers inbound to the Mina Al-Bakr terminal pursuant to UN authorization under UNSCR 986 and subsequent resolutions will normally be authorized to proceed uninterrupted through the checkpoint described in paragraph 3c. Advance notification and check-in on VHF channel 16 are still required.

b. Vessels transporting bulk humanitarian cargoes are invited to contact the MIF Coordinator prior to sailing to explore pre-clearance options which use voyage monitoring methods and cargo loading certification from approved agents. The MIF Coordinator may consider alternate pre-clearance procedures on a case-by-case basis.

c. Notwithstanding the pre-clearance options discussed above, the multinational naval forces retain the right under UNSCR 665 and other relevant resolutions to conduct document checks and at-sea inspections of any vessel when deemed necessary.

5. **Incomplete documentation.**—Vessels bound for Iraq which are determined to have incomplete cargo manifests, or to be otherwise in violation of the requirements listed in this Advisory, may be detained by the naval forces or diverted to a non-Iraqi port until appropriate conditions are met.

6. **Petroleum exports and bunker fuel not approved by the UN.**—Outbound vessels are subject to search by the MIF. If an intercepted vessel is suspected to be carrying a cargo of Iraqi petroleum, petroleum products, or has taken on Iraqi bunker fuel without UN authorization, the MIF will take cargo and bunker fuel samples for laboratory analysis, examination, and comparison with Iraqi control samples.

Vessels suspected of violating UN sanctions may be detained, and if it is determined that a petroleum cargo is of

Iraqi origin, the cargo will be seized and disposed of in accordance with UNSCR 778.

In such cases, the vessel itself and crew may be subject to enforcement actions by an accepting UN Member State.

7. Cruise and passenger ships.—Cruise or passenger ships traversing the MIF enforcement area will be subject to the following requirements:

a. Vessels with no commercial cargo carrying capacity may arrange for an expeditious transit through the enforcement area by forwarding certification from a member of the International Association of Classification Societies (IACS) that the ship has no such capacity. The certification must be sent by letter or fax at least 60 days prior to transit.

b. A passenger vessel arriving in the enforcement area which has not complied with the requirements of paragraph 7a will be boarded and inspected during daylight hours.

If it is determined that the vessel has no commercial cargo carrying capacity, its identification will be recorded so that it may be visually identified and not boarded during subsequent transits.

8. Merchant advisory updates.—Vessels should contact the Commander, US Naval Forces Central Command,

Maritime Interception Coordinator (N31CG), FPO AE 09501-6008 by telephone or facsimile, as follows:

Telephone: +973 724 839

+973 724 841

Facsimile: +973 724 344

+973 724 334

Time Zone

The Time Zone description is CHARLIE (-3). Daylight Savings Time (DELTA (-4)) is maintained from April 1 until September 30.

World Time Zone Chart

<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/ref/pdf/802801.pdf>

U.S. Embassy

There is no U.S. Embassy in Iraq. The U.S. has an Interests Section in the Polish Embassy at Alwiyah (opposite the Foreign Ministry Club in the Masbah District), Baghdad.

The mailing address is P.O. Box 2051, Hay Babel, Baghdad.